

Emergency Responder

WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION



WASHINGTON MILITARY DEPARTMENT

January - February 2004

Field office closes for October floods, storms

Recovery work for the October 2003 floods and storms officially shifted Feb. 20 from Bothell to the Emergency Management Division's (EMD) Camp Murray headquarters and Olympia Recovery Field Office.

The closure of the Bothell office marked the official closure of the Disaster Field Office for the federal disaster declared last Nov. 7 for the storms and flooding from Oct. 15-23.

A total of 15 counties were included in the declaration for individuals and households assistance. These were Chelan, Clallam, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Mason, Okanogan, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Thurston and Whatcom counties.

Later in November, the federal disaster declaration was expanded to include seven counties for public assistance programs for debris removal and public infrastructure damage.

A Disaster Field Office, staffed by state and federal disaster recovery staff, opened Nov. 10 at Everett's Paine Field. By Jan. 5, the disaster field office was scaled back and transferred to temporary Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offices in Bothell.

State and federal assistance for the October 2003 storms and flood disaster topped \$4.4 million, including \$2.2 million in grants from the Individuals and Households Program and \$2.1 million in U.S. Small Business Administration loans to homeowners, renters and businesses of all sizes.

More than 1,400 registrations for disaster aid were received through FEMA's toll-free registration line.



Michael Namchek, left, program coordinator in the Telecommunications section of the Emergency Management Division's Response and Recovery Unit, helps State Emergency Operations Officer Jim Kadrmas send an Emergency Alert System message to cancel the statewide Amber Alert that led to the safe recovery of an abducted California girl on Feb. 6. (EMD Photo by Rob Harper)

State-wide Amber Alert ends successfully

Washington's second Amber Alert led quickly to the successful Feb. 6 apprehension of a 48-year-old California man who was driving north on Interstate 5 with an abducted 15-year-old California girl.

The alert request came to the Emergency Management Division's State Emergency Operations Officers at 1:24 p.m. from the Washington State Patrol, which had been contacted by California law enforcement officials about a California teenage girl who had been missing since Feb. 3.

Cell phone calls on Feb. 6 had placed the abducted girl and older male driver in a pickup truck traveling north on Interstate 5 near Tacoma, and the WSP said it was believed the two were headed for British Columbia.

After confirming the WSP alert message text, State Emergency Operations Officers Jim Kadrmas and Ken Lehman sent the alert at 2:02 p.m. to radio and television stations across the state. In addition, the alert was relayed simultaneously to local law enforcement, emergency managers and the state Department of Transportation for placement on highway reader boards.

Several Seattle television and radio stations interrupted broadcasts to carry the Amber Alert. The Associated Press distributed the information statewide by 2:20 p.m.

Results came quickly from the alert message. By 3 p.m., with help from a witness report from a DOT worker, the WSP had located the truck carrying the abducted girl at an Interstate 5 rest stop in Skagit County. The girl was found safe and the truck driver was arrested.

Washington's first Amber Alert in February 2003 was for a five-year Kenn-ewick girl who was not located.

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Washington completes homeland security strategic plan

Washington's Statewide Homeland Security Strategic Plan made its official debut Jan. 9 in a joint press conference announcement by Gov. Gary Locke and Maj. Gen. Timothy J. Lowenberg, director, Washington Military Department (WMD).

Prepared by the WMD during the last six months of 2003, the plan focuses on state and federal resources to further secure and safeguard the state. The plan was written following extensive involvement of citizens, business, non-profit organizations, tribal nations and local, state and federal government agencies.

Strategic objectives of the plan include:

- Reducing Washington's vulnerability to terrorism;
- Defending against, deterring, dissuading and preventing terrorist attacks from occurring within Washington state;
- Preparing citizens, governments, tribal nations and businesses at all levels to effectively respond in the event of a terrorist attack; and
- Minimizing the damage and effectively responding to and recovering from attacks that may occur.

The plan calls for the selection and approval of coordinating leads for the 30 statewide objectives and the 76 implementation strategies. Coordinating leads include 17 state agencies, statewide associations and commissions. The governor's Domestic Security Executive Group on Feb. 16 endorsed the nominations for the coordinating leads.

Nancy Bickford, WMD homeland security strategic planner, said the next step in the process is the development of action plans for the statewide strategies by next Aug. 1.

The state's new strategic plan received conditional approval in late January from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Other homeland security program developments were:

- The name of the Committee on Terrorism was changed in February to the Committee on Homeland Security to reflect the committee's entire scope of work.
- Washington in January officially applied for the Federal Fiscal Year 2004 Homeland Security funding which totals \$44 million. The total grant includes \$33.4 million for the State Homeland Security Program, \$9.9 million for the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program, and \$694,000 for the Citizen Corps Program.
- The state in December 2003 submitted an application for the Federal Fiscal Year 2004 Urban Area Security Initiative grant of \$17.2 million for the city of Seattle and King, Pierce and Snohomish counties. The grant also assigns Mass Transit funding to Sound Transit.
- WMD in late February began the publication of the bimonthly Homeland Security Update newsletter to provide detailed information and background on the state's homeland security program. Copies can be obtained by e-mail by contacting Joe Huden, special assistant to the WMD director, at <Joe.Huden@mil.wa.gov> or at 253-512-7712. Copies are also available on the Emergency Management Division website at: <http://emd.wa.gov>.

Locke Names Porter, Hoffman to State EMC

Washington State Patrol Chief Lowell Porter and Department of Ecology Acting Director Linda Hoffman were appointed to the State Emergency Management Council Feb. 13 by Gov. Gary Locke.

The council advises the governor and the Washington Emergency Management Division on all matters relating to emergency services in the state and acts as an arbitration body to settle search and rescue claims between the state and local governments.

Washington lawmakers near March 11 deadline

As a March 11 adjournment deadline approaches, the 2004 Washington Legislature has relatively few emergency management-related measures awaiting final action. The following is a status of some 2004 legislation impacting the Emergency Management Division:

- House Joint Memorial 4040 urges Congress to enact a national 211 telephone dialing option to provide direct public access to social and human services. The memorial, which was passed unanimously in the House Feb. 13, has a companion memorial in the Senate, SJM 8044.
- House Bill 2450 which would require background checks of gubernatorial appointments to agency head positions, passed the House unanimously Feb. 11. The measure now awaits final committee action in the Senate.
- House Bill 1488 would require each state agency, within available funds, to develop and implement a quality management program to improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the public services it provides through business process redesign, employee involvement, and other quality management techniques. The bill, which passed the House in a 79-17 vote on Feb. 13, has been referred to committee in the Senate.

CTED director named

Juli Wilkerson, Tacoma's director of economic development since 1999, was appointed director of the state Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) on Jan. 21 by Gov. Gary Locke.

She succeeded Martha Choe, who was named by Locke to serve as the new state coordinator for the Boeing 7E7 project.

Washington Emergency Management Division works closely with CTED on long range planning and hazard mitigation issues as well as on disaster recovery programs for communities.

Internet calls to 9-1-1 may take extra time

Internet users should not expect the same immediate response from an Internet call to 9-1-1 as you would by placing calls to 9-1-1 from your telephone, according to the Emergency Management Division's Enhanced 911 program.

While Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is changing the shape of the telecommunications industry, it is not government regulated and has no 9-1-1 emergency calling requirements in place. VoIP provides those with high-speed Internet access to make inexpensive long distance phone calls.

Kurt Hardin, supervisor of the E911 Unit's customer support section, said that the Internet VoIP industry is participating in setting voluntary practices toward provision of enhanced 9-1-1 service, but it is just that – voluntary.

The industry is only in the developmental stages. Access consistency and reliability on behalf of all Internet VoIP providers will be vital to the delivery of 9-1-1 emergency responses, he said.

Currently, Internet users may not have the ability to call 9-1-1 from a VoIP phone. And, if these users could dial 9-1-1, the call may not be routed to the emergency call taker responsible for sending help.

There also is no automated display of location information nor will the call be recognized as occurring on the 9-1-1 call management network. If a user can dial 9-1-1 from the VoIP phone, it will be as if you dialed a 10-digit emergency number. The caller will have to be able to tell the call taker where to send help.

In time, Hardin said, the Internet phone calls may be able to provide to the 9-1-1 call taker the same information as we have come to expect from wired and wireless telephones.



City of Vancouver workers clear limbs and trees from a city street after a succession of early January snow and ice storms. The National Weather Service said Clark and Skamania counties would experience such severe winter weather only since every 25 years. (City of Vancouver photo)

Federal disaster aid sought for Clark, Skamania counties

Washington state is awaiting a decision from President Bush on a request for a federal disaster declaration for Clark and Skamania counties because of winter storm damage between Jan. 6-10.

Gov. Gary Locke requested the federal declaration Feb. 9 after the governor proclaimed an emergency in the two counties, which experienced one of the worst ice and snowstorms in decades in early January. The National Weather Service has estimated that such a snow and ice storm event would hit the Clark-Skamania area only once every 25 years.

"The storm damage and continuing cleanup costs are significant," the governor said. Preliminary assessments by state and local emergency management officials found more than \$4 million in public facility damages that could qualify for federal disaster assistance. Economic activity was shut down for nearly a week in the two counties.

Skamania County and the town of Stevenson not only lost tourist revenue during the storm, but spent major percentages of their road maintenance budgets to maintain emergency services. Debris and tree removal are expected to require weeks of additional work, especially in Clark County and the city of Vancouver, according to the governor.

The state emergency proclamation directed state agencies "to do everything possible to assist political subdivisions in an effort to respond to and recover from the event."

If approved by the President, the disaster request could provide federal and state grants to local governments to pay for eligible costs of debris removal and emergency protective measures as well as for eligible costs to repair roads, water control facilities, public buildings, public utilities and parks.

President Bush on Feb. 19 approved a federal disaster declaration for 26 Oregon counties damaged by winter storms that began late last December.

That federal declaration would provide grants to pay 75 percent of the approved cost of debris removal, emergency services, and the repair or replacement of public facilities damaged by storms that occurred from Dec. 26, 2003 through Jan. 14, 2004.

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April is Disaster Preparedness Month in Washington

April 1 will mark the start of Disaster Preparedness Month in Washington.

Local emergency managers, public safety answer points, school districts, tribes and state agencies already have been sent the new Emergency Preparedness Campaign 2004 information kit, which includes a new poster on chemical hazards, an emergency preparedness 2004 calendar, 9-1-1 information and materials, a state roadmap to emergency preparedness, and several activities for children.

Additional packets may be ordered through Barbara Thurman, Emergency Management Division's public education manager, at 253-512-7047 or <b.thurman@emd.wa.gov>

Major events in Disaster Preparedness Month will include the Partners in Emergency Preparedness conference, the state Local Emergency Planning Committee conference and the April 22 Drop, Cover and Hold Drill from 9:45 to 10 a.m.

Preparedness Conference set for April 13-14 in Bellevue

James Lee Witt, former director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), will be a featured speaker at the Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference April 13-14 at the Bellevue DoubleTree Hotel.

Witt, who directed FEMA from 1993 to 2001, will present the conference keynote address at 9 a.m. April 13. Other featured speakers will be Glen Woodbury, director, Washington Emergency Management Division; and Ron Carlee, county executive of Arlington County, Va., a primary responder to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack against the Pentagon.

More than 400 participants are expected at the conference, which will include sessions on emergency preparedness, community and business disaster recovery plans, and applying incident command principles to school emergencies.

Conference registrations may be made by mail, phone, fax, e-mail or on-line through Washington State University Conferences and Professional Programs at P. O. Box 64522, Pullman, WA 99164-5222; phone, 800-942-4978 or 509-335-3530; fax, 509-335-0945; on-line, <http://capps.wsu.edu/emergencyprep> or e-mail, wsuconf@wsu.edu

Personnel

Carol Losey joined EMD Jan. 5 in the newly created position of Office Assistant Senior in the Enhanced 9-1-1 Unit. She previously worked for the State Department of Health and the State Library.

William Boyd started Feb. 9 as an Information Technology Systems Specialist 5 in the Enhanced 9-1-1 Unit. He came to the unit from Qwest.

Dave Irwin was promoted to Information Technology System/Applications Specialist in the Enhanced 9-1-1 Unit on Dec. 15. A nine-year EMD employee, Irwin has worked in the E911 Unit since 1999.

Valeria Brown, who had worked since November 2001 in the Olympia Disaster Recovery Field Office as an office assistant senior, was promoted Feb. 23 to the position of Secretary Lead in the Policy, Programs and Training Section of the Preparedness Unit.

Sheryl Jardine on Feb. 23 became the Program Coordinator in the Homeland Security Section of the Preparedness Unit. She had worked for the past three years in the Olympia Disaster Recovery Field office.

Internet calls to 9-1-1 may take extra time

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Until then, those using VoIP to call 9-1-1 should anticipate that this advanced telephone service is a step back to the days when you needed to know the 10-digit police, fire or medical emergency telephone number to call for help.

For additional information, contact Kurt Hardin at 253-512-7014.

Governor names Porter as new WSP Chief

Lowell M. Porter was named chief of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) Jan. 9 to succeed Ronal Serpas who resigned to become chief of police in Nashville, Tenn.

Powell, who was commissioned as a trooper in 1983, most recently served as deputy chief of the WSP and commander of its Field Operations Bureau.

Capt. Glenn Cramer, former supervisor of the WSP's Office of Government and Media Relations, was promoted to replace Porter as deputy chief, field operations bureau.

Disaster field office closes

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Initial estimates of public assistance program grants for the October storms and floods range from \$8 million to \$10 million. More than 60 applicants are anticipated.



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The Washington Emergency Management Division, including the State Emergency Operations Center, is located in Building 20 on Camp Murray, located at exit 122 on Interstate 5 south of Tacoma, Washington.